

Massachusetts Community Transportation Coordination Conference May 5, 2015

Central Reservation/Dispatch Systems for Council on Aging Transportation

Three presenters:

- Carl Damigella, Brand Management/Outreach & Travel Training Coordinator, MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)
- Linda Marshall, Outreach Coordinator, Holliston Council on Aging
- Scott Zadakis, Director, CrossTown Connect

COA transportation has often been very municipality-based, serving the residents of just that town, going only to locations within town or nearby. Some COAs are partnering with regional initiatives to expand the scope of their services without substantially increasing their expenses. In these examples, the town's seniors call the central dispatch/reservation number instead of the COA. The COA gets in return a full manifest for that day's trips for their vehicles, which represents less work for the COA and more staff time for other things. As well as freeing up staff time at the COA, another advantage is that with a central reservation system, the vehicles can be used more efficiently. If one senior is going from one town to the local hospital, and another senior in the next town over is going to the same hospital, the central dispatcher will know that and be able to schedule both trips on the same van, making the trip more efficient and freeing up the other van for other trips.

Scott Zadakis of CrossTown Connect presented on the dispatch services they offer to the COAs in their member towns. Carl Damigella and Linda Marshall spoke about the switch for the MWRTA-affiliated COAs from scheduling their own rides to having their seniors call the MWRTA call center.

CrossTown Connect

- A municipally-led Transportation Management Association (TMA) that is a public private partnership (PPP) between communities and businesses
- Provide traditional TMA services such as ridematching, guaranteed ride home, carpool/vanpool programs, and promotion of active commuting options
- Also operate a central dispatch call center that municipal partners can opt into
- Program provides full day dispatching for community based services including COA vans for Acton, Boxborough, Littleton, and Maynard and the Minutevan dial-a-ride service
- A challenge is that member communities straddle two RTAs (LRTA and MART). CrossTown Connect is currently working with the RTAs to establish guidelines for sharing the meet requirements of both

MWRTA and Holliston COA

- MWRTA took on scheduling & dispatching rides for the Holliston COA
- By participating in this system, Holliston has increased their number of trips up to 4000! Dispatch hours also increased
- Needs 48 hours' notice for ride
- Certain days are for medical, groceries or hair appointments
- Riders need to set up an account – cannot pay fare on van

- Every COA charges different fees and the call takers needed to know what every town charges
- OUTREACH very important